UNIT TWO: Isaac and Jacob

Lesson 6: “God Adjudicates Jacob, June 3, 2024

Learning Objective: that the disciple learns that God avenges and blesses His people

Reading: Genesis 31: 1-55

“ God Adjudicates Jacob”

Sowing and reaping is a fixed principle in God’s kingdom. Whether our actions are good or bad, there will always be a time of reward or retribution for them. This week’s lesson bears this truth out very clearly.

For years, Laban, Jacob’s father-in-law, dealt unjustly with Jacob. Laban and his sons turned against Jacob when the Lord blessed him to the point of prosperity and getting an upper hand over them. However, as Jacob stated to Leah and Rachel, Laban had for years acted treacherously with him.

Laban changed Jacob’s wages ten times; but as Jacob said, the Lord protected him ( V.7). Jacob went on to say that it was God- not him-who thwarted Laban’s mischief, caused his schemes against Jacob to fail and took away Laban’s cattle or flocks, and gave them to Jacob (V.9).

Jacob recounted a dream in which the Angel of God spoke to him. In it, he saw speckled or striped rams coming upon and impregnating the flocks of sheep and goats. In the dream, the Angel of God told Jacob that He caused it to happen because He had seen all that Laban doeth unto thee” ( V.12).

The Lord then reminded Jacob of what happened at Bethel- how he ( Jacob) anointed the pillar and made a vow to God (V.13a). The Lord after that told Jacob to leave that land, and go back to his native country ( V. 13b).

Leah’s and Rachel’s response was that their father, Laban, sold them, treated them like they were not even related to him, and took all of their money. They realized that God had requited Laban for his evil deeds by taking from him, and giving to Jacob. Leah and Rachel told Jacob to obey God’s commandment to leave.

Jacob then gathered together his family, all that he had, and left Laban, unawares ,to return to his homeland. When Laban realized that Jacob and his family had secretly left him three days earlier, he gathered together a company of people, and he and they pursued them and overtook them.

However in a dream, God spoke to Laban and told him not to speak “good or bad” to Jacob ( V.24). Laban asked Jacob why he fled away with his daughters. He claimed that he would have sent them all off with a celebration.

Laban said that it was in his power to bring harm to Jacob; but God told him not to speak good nor bad to him ( V.29). He then asked Jacob why he had stolen his gods ( not knowing that it was actually Rachel who had taken them, unbeknownst to even Jacob).

Jacob told him that he fled with his family because he was afraid that Laban would have forcibly detained his daughters and grandchildren to keep them from leaving him.

Jacob allowed Laban to search all of their tents and property for his gods. Jacob said that whoever had taken them would pay for them with his or her life (V.32). Laban searched for them, but did not find them because they were hidden in the camel’s furniture; and Rachel was seated on them.

After that, the Bible says that Jacob was angry and confronted Laban about his years of mistreatment of him. Jacob asked Laban to tell him how he had so wronged him that caused him to pursue after him with such fervor (V.36). Jacob stated all of the ways that Laban had wronged him, instead.

Jacob spoke of how he bore the heat of the day for years caring for his flocks, and did not rest well at night protecting them. Jacob reminded him how he himself bore the loss for any of Laban’s flocks that were killed or injured. He reminded Laban also that he did not take any of them for his food.

Jacob reminded Laban that he had changed his wages ten times; and that he had served him fourteen years for his daughters and six years for the loss of Laban’s cattle.

Laban’s incredible response was that his daughters , grandchildren, and Jacob’s cattle were all his ; so how could he harm them (V.43)? Laban proposed that he and Jacob make a covenant together, and that it be a witness between the two of them (V.44). Jacob agreed to this.

Jacob got a stone and set up a pillar. He put a pile of stones on top of that; and he and Laban ate together there, which was an element of making covenants. Laban called it “ Jegar-sahadutha”, or “ witness heap” ( See Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, definition H 3026). Jacob called it “Galeed”, which also means “witness heap” in Hebrew( See Strong’s definition H1567).

Laban said it was to be a witness between himself and Jacob. He also said that it was “Mizpah”, which means [a] “watchtower”; because he said “ The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another” (V. 49). [ Often at the closing of religious services, the Mizpah is uttered by congregants to invoke God’s loving care over each other until the next time that they assemble. However, Jacob and Laban did not trust each other; and their utterance of it was to call upon God to protect each of them from one another].

Jacob swore by his father, Isaac, sacrificed to God; and then he and his company ate together. The next morning, Laban kissed his family goodbye, and returned to his home.

God avenged Jacob of Laban’s years of mistreatment, and blessed him. This is a great lesson for us as God’s people today. The Lord will do the same for us when we allow Him -not we ourselves-to adjudicate wrongs that we have suffered because of others’ actions; and He will also bless us, quite often openly.

Answers to Lesson Five’s Questions

Q1What did Laban acknowledge about Jacob’s presence with him?

Answer: Laban acknowledged that God had blessed him while Jacob was with him.

Q2:True or False: Unspotted/un-speckled sheep were more valuable than spotted/speckled sheep.

Answer: False

Q3: What was the result of Jacob’s plan to increase the numbers of his sheep?

Answer: God caused it to be successful; and he became more prosperous and powerful than Laban.

This Week’s Questions

1 How did Jacob learn that he was to return to his homeland ?

2 What was Laban’s response?

3 What was the true meaning of the Mizpah?